



CENTER ON RACE, POVERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT

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I. Project title and Project Purpose Statement

- Project title: *Plugging Rural Communities into Renewable Energy Sources*
- Project Summary: The Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE) plans to explore the opportunities and challenges for two rural California communities to transition to renewable energy sources. As a result of this project, we will not only have a better understanding of the ways to connect rural communities to renewable energy, but will assist Ducor and Wasco with implementing small scale solar projects. In the process, we will also educate residents and create action steps to move the two communities towards their goal of plugging into the sustainable grid.
- Location: This project will take place in the two California communities of Ducor, zip code 93218, and Wasco, zip code 93280, both based in the San Joaquin Valley.
- Environmental Statute this project addresses: Clean Air Act, by reducing air emissions through increased local renewable energy.

II. Environmental Public Health and Community Climate Resiliency information about Affected Community

This project will be housed in our Forgotten Voices Campaign, which focuses on improving the energy, drinking water, and wastewater infrastructure in low income Latino communities in the south San Joaquin Valley counties of Kern and Tulare in rural California. For this project, CRPE will focus on decreasing dependency on fossil fuel energy sources by increasing access to renewable energy in Wasco and Ducor. This is particularly important as part of a climate resiliency strategy because studies show that the region is expected to see a rise in temperature, forcing more people to rely on costly cooling systems that they cannot afford if they do not have access to affordable sources of electricity. Our project seeks to help underserved communities leapfrog over 20th Century technology, availing themselves of the 21st Century technology that is emerging due to the impacts of climate change.

Both communities face high costs of energy. In Ducor, the community is not connected to natural gas pipelines. As a result, community residents heat their homes in the winter with propane. Propane emits more CO₂ per BTU than natural gas.¹ In addition to greenhouse gas emissions, residents have complained about the high costs charged for propane deliveries. They are often paying two to three

¹ Propane produces 139 pounds of CO₂ per million BTU of energy compared to natural gas which produces 117 pounds of CO₂ per million BTU of energy burned. US Energy Information Administration <http://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.cfm?id=73&t=11> (last visited on 12/18/14)

times as much for heat as their neighbors in Terra Bella. Residents have tried to work with the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, Southern California Edison and Pacific Gas and Electric to connect to natural gas pipelines, but the costs associated with that make it infeasible. Rather than rely on solutions based on burning fossil fuels, the community would like to find ways to benefit from 21st Century energy technology that focuses on energy efficiency, solar, and other renewable energy sources. Ducor would like to demonstrate that low income communities of color in rural areas can also benefit from renewable energy and reduce their carbon footprint while generating local job opportunities for residents.

Similarly in Wasco, residents of the local housing authority are interested in exploring opportunities to benefit from 21st Century energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. The current housing authority buildings date from the 1940's and 50's and were constructed as farmworker labor camps. They still provide housing for farmworkers and their families predominately. The housing authority apartments are the only residential housing units located south of the train tracks in downtown Wasco. In addition to the train tracks, the housing units are bordered by a coal storage facility, a pallet recycling center that caught fire several years ago, and an organic pesticide company that is on the Toxic Release Inventory.

Because of the high number of pollution sources and its geographic isolation from the rest of the City of Wasco, the City Council is considering plans to relocate the housing authority apartment units. CRPE is playing a central role in these efforts since we have been working with the housing authority residents for several years, as discussed below. As part of the relocation plans, residents are interested in ensuring the units are energy efficient, rely on renewable energy as their energy source, and provide opportunities for residents to grow their own pesticide-free produce. The City will be planning for the relocation in 2015, so it is a critical time for the residents to be engaged in the planning process and identify ways the City can improve residents' access to healthy food and healthy energy sources.

As a result of this project, we expect to: strengthen the capacity of two grassroots community groups to engage on energy infrastructure issues in their communities; develop 20 grassroots leaders to engage on energy infrastructure and climate resilience planning at the local, regional and state level; create a network of resources for San Joaquin Valley residents to access in order to address their infrastructure deficits; and form an implementation plan that will result in renewable energy pilot projects in these two communities.

The communities of Ducor and Wasco are some of the most cumulatively impacted in the State, as reflected in CalEnviroScreen 2.0.² Wasco has a population of 25,545, and 76.7% of the population is Latino, 7.6% is African American, 17.9% are unemployed, and 32.4% live below the poverty line. Ducor is an unincorporated community in Southern Tulare County. It is a Census Designated Place. It has a population of 612 people, and 82% of the population is Latino, 16.7% are unemployed, and

² CalEnviroScreen 2.0,

<http://oehha.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=112d915348834263ab8ecd5c6da67f68> (last viewed January 7, 2015). The zip codes in Wasco vary in terms of their scores on the CalEnviroScreen. CRPE works in the area of town that is within the top 10-15% most impacted in the state. Ducor scores within the top 19% most impacted in the state.

38% of families live below the poverty line.

III. Organization's Historical Connection to the Affected Community

CRPE is a 501(c)(3) environmental justice organization with a 25-year history of working with low income communities and communities of color in the San Joaquin Valley. We have worked with Wasco and Ducor for over a decade. For the last 16 years, we have had office in Delano, California located within 20 miles of both Ducor and Wasco in addition to our office in Oakland.

Wasco: CRPE has been providing legal and organizing assistance to Wasco for 10 years on air quality issues, particularly around the Air District's attainment plans as well as local land use issues such as dairies. In 2004, Kern County placed a moratorium on dairies until it could prepare three Group Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) for roughly 28 proposed dairies, many of which are proposed around Wasco. These dairies, if built, would double the number of cows in Kern County. Since 2004, we have been training community members on the California Environmental Quality Act, air pollution generally, and water pollution. Because of our work with housing authority residents on dairies, they asked us for help when several residents were faced with eviction notices. We connected residents with housing rights advocates who were able to delay and in many cases stop the evictions. As a result of these efforts, one of the leaders we were working with was appointed to the Housing Authority Board as an agency representative. Since she needed translations to effectively participate, the Housing Authority for the first time offered translation at their regular meetings, which prompted other changes that made the board more responsive to residents' needs. In addition to the work on dairies and housing authority governance, we have helped residents participate in hearings on California's High Speed Rail project, Ethanol plant siting issues at the City Council, and a recent City Council debate on whether or not to become a Charter City. Wasco residents were also key participants in creating the vision for the Valley that was formed out of our Power to the People Campaign.

Ducor: We have been working with Ducor for 11 years. We helped form the community group Si Se Puede de Ducor, which originally formed to hold the local water district accountable. Brown water (the color of Coke) would come out of residents' taps because of improper treatment techniques. We worked with residents to change the water district's treatment practices and secure the necessary technical training for the district staff. Since then, we have continued to assist residents to participate in water board meetings. In addition, Ducor is not connected to natural gas even though the lines run through the community. We helped residents to survey the community and neighboring communities on utility costs, and we have been talking with PG&E and Southern California Edison about connecting to the community. Edison has been the most responsive. We helped arrange a meeting with the Southern California Edison, the County, and Ducor residents. Density is the biggest barrier to a long-term solution of hooking the community up to natural gas. Southern California Edison believes the community is not big enough to warrant a hook-up to natural gas. The committee recently learned about the possibility of local solar projects. Residents are interested in learning about how such a project could help Ducor and other communities as the State transitions to cleaner forms of energy as part of its climate change policy.

All of the communities with which we work have been engaged on climate change in relation to implementation of California's high profile climate change laws AB 32 and SB 375. In 2008, we trained and mobilized over 30 Valley residents, including residents from Wasco and Ducor, to testify in Sacramento at the California Air Resources Board hearing on implementing AB 32, California's Global Warming Solutions Act, in a way that benefits low income communities. Over the last three years, we have held community visioning sessions, trained residents on SB 375 (California's landmark climate change and land use law) assisted Kern County with outreach to SB 375 workshops, and helped residents prepare to testify at public hearings around SB 375's Sustainable Community Strategies. Over the last six years, more than 15 community residents from Wasco and Ducor have participated in trainings, workshops, and public hearings related to climate change.

CRPE engages with community residents on a continuous basis. We use a number of strategies to ensure community residents are connected to and direct our administrative advocacy in a sustained way. First, two community members sit on our Board of Directors providing leadership to our overall work. Second, we have an Advisory Board made up of representatives from the communities we work with in the San Joaquin Valley who are the eyes and ears of their communities. At our regular meetings, they inform us about what is going on in the community as well as provide feedback on our work in the Valley to ensure that our work is relevant to the community. Third, our leadership development work focuses on creating self-sufficient community-based organizations. For example, we helped residents form Si Se Puede de Ducor and Comite Rosas de Wasco. We provide trainings to community members during which we learn from the community about the pressing issues facing their communities. What we learn from the communities directly impacts our campaigns as well as our advocacy at administrative agencies. We then train community members on how to advocate for themselves around those issues by providing substantive trainings on the issues as well as capacity building trainings on public speaking, testifying at public hearings, and speaking to the media. We also provide resources to help residents travel to meet directly with decision-makers, often providing transportation, refreshments and childcare to allow people to participate in meetings with officials or public hearings. Community residents are directly involved in our work at each step of the way from policy formation to policy advocacy with the goal of creating community leaders who will remain involved even when CRPE is not.

IV. Project Description

As a result of this project, we expect to: strengthen the capacity of two grassroots community groups to engage on infrastructure issues in their communities; develop 20 grassroots leaders to engage on infrastructure and climate resilience planning at the local, regional, and state level; create a community vision for infrastructure development in the region with the active participation of residents from these two communities that represent small rural cities and small unincorporated areas; and form an implementation plan that will result in renewable energy infrastructure projects in Ducor and Wasco.

i. Description of activities to achieve this result

As a part of our larger campaign to strengthen local infrastructures and build resilient communities, we are working with rural communities in Kern and Tulare counties to identify issues of concern and work with residents to develop the solutions that work for them. In both Wasco and Ducor, residents have identified a desire to transition away from dirty energy to renewable energy. In California we have a unique opportunity under AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, and SB 375, the Sustainable Communities Strategies, to address some of the most persistent infrastructure problems that these communities have faced for years. AB 32 and the resulting energy policies call for California to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and increase our use on renewable energy sources. Sustainable Communities Strategies are meant to integrate land use and transportation programs in a plan that, when implemented, would reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) and greenhouse gas emissions. The State, through planning priorities under SB 375 and related policies, has also developed incentives that promote development in existing communities. California has designated at least 25% of its greenhouse gas cap and trade funds to benefit disproportionately impacted communities. Disadvantaged communities have been identified through the State's cumulative impact tool, Cal EnviroScreen 2.0. Both Ducor and Wasco are among the top 20% most impacted communities in California.

Over the next year, CRPE's Forgotten Voices project will systemize renewable energy and climate resiliency training for community members. Our outputs will include providing four community trainings to Wasco residents and four to Ducor residents on topics related to climate change, air quality *and* renewable energy under the federal Clean Air Act (CAA), including US EPA's proposed power plant rule. This program will train 50 residents. These trainings will result in at least 20 community residents actively involved in renewable energy and infrastructure policy development at the local and state level. CRPE will build upon these trainings in *three* ways: by engaging the 15 community leaders comprised of representatives of each of the communities in a larger community infrastructure visioning process; by creating a plan for demonstration projects in each of the communities that can be implemented as part of the State's commitment to address climate change and climate resiliency; and by assembling a network of technical assistance that can help communities implement their plans.

Trainings: During the first two months of the project, CRPE will develop a renewable energy and climate resiliency curriculum that combines substantive and capacity building materials. Substantive training materials include: information on air quality – an overview of local, regional, state and national regulatory frameworks; climate change and resiliency under AB 32 and SB 375 implementation and more sustainable alternatives; and opportunities for public infrastructure financing and participatory budgeting. In addition, we will provide information regarding best practices from other similar communities such as Fresno, the Central Coast, and the Inland Valley. Capacity-building trainings will include: trainings on how to facilitate meetings; power mapping analyses and identifying appropriate decision-makers; basic research skills for accessing public information; campaign planning for future sustainability; and public speaking skills.

During the months 2-8, we will hold trainings four trainings in each of the communities based on

the Infrastructure curriculum. We will also begin to identify partners throughout the state who can help the communities meet their goals. This includes the California Environmental Justice Alliance, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, Proteus, Inc, and Self-Help Enterprises, as well as small scale solar companies who have experience with projects in developing countries.

Once the trainings are complete, in month 9 we will hold a group community planning and visioning meeting with representatives from each of the communities. The purpose of the meeting is to lay out an environmental justice blueprint from the growth and development of small rural communities in the Valley, their infrastructure needs as well as the programs by which those needs can be met.

Over the course of months 10-12, each community will create its own plan for how it will meet its top renewable energy needs, which includes: the public agency to partner with; the sources of local, state or federal money that could potentially finance the project; and how to generate community support for initiation of the project. For Wasco, this will feed into the City's plans for relocating the housing authority. In Ducor, this may result in a plan to implement a small scale renewable energy project in the community.

In order to achieve these results, CRPE will employ its organizing model, which is strengthening existing community groups in these two communities, providing substantive and capacity building trainings, and connecting community groups with potential allies as well as with potential sources of infrastructure revenue. The potential sources are AB 32 cap and trade revenue for disadvantaged communities, the State's Green Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank, and revenue available under SB 375 to implement a Sustainable Community Strategy. Our ambition is that over the course of this grant, we will create a directory of local and state resources for small communities to access for community improvements. In addition, we hope to connect residents to these institutions to ensure they are responsive to the needs of small low income communities and communities of color beyond Wasco and Ducor.

In order to complete the project, CRPE will partner with the following community-based organizations: Si Se Puede de Ducor and Comité ROSAS. CRPE will provide legal and technical assistance to create the environmental justice curriculum and will provide the trainings and connect with other organizations who exhibit expertise in these issues to consult with, and conduct, specific trainings. Our community-based partners are responsible for organizing the logistics of drawing residents to the trainings, calling members, inviting allies and securing a training location. CRPE, along with the community groups, will plan the agenda for the training and assist with logistics for the training. As an organization that supports the grassroots movement for environmental justice and works directly and collaboratively with environmental justice communities, we have a vested interest in partnering with community members and helping make their vision a reality. Without this support, community groups will lose faith, become discouraged, and no longer feel capable of achieving their environmental goals. Our San Joaquin Valley staff has a vested interest in making Valley communities healthier and more engaged in decisions that impact their well-being and health.

In order to sustain these partnerships, CRPE staff will attend the regular community groups' meetings. These meetings are held at least monthly, if not weekly. CRPE is also seeking funding to implement this program from a variety of sources and linking these communities with others in the Valley. Representatives from each of these community groups will attend our Advisory Board meetings in 2015, which meets every two months. In the last quarter of the grant, we will take our lessons learned and produce a short report in both English and Spanish, documenting the challenges Wasco and Ducor face in obtaining renewable energy and the opportunities and means that can help or have helped them overcome these barriers. The report will be distributed to local decisions-makers in Tulare County and Wasco to influence those who have the power to improve the local infrastructure. The report can also have a larger application for other rural communities working towards a similar goal, including the various other communities CRPE works directly with across the San Joaquin Valley.

V. Organizational Capacity and Programmatic Capability

CRPE has over 25 years of administering grants, financial and reporting systems. We use QuickBooks to track income and expenses to create financial reports. We create annual work plans for each of our campaigns and monthly implementation check-ins, and we engage in a strategic planning process every three years. Our campaigns inform our fundraising plans and the grants we will pursue over the course of the next year. In drafting grant proposals, the grant-writer will discuss project goals and deliverables for the proposal with each campaign team to ensure there is sufficient capacity and expertise to implement each grant project. During implementation of the grant, we create tracking tools, such as sign-in sheets, training evaluations, and overall program/campaign evaluation tools to ensure that we meet our deliverables. We utilize these tools to create grant reports as well. In terms of financial reporting, we have expense reporting forms that allow us to track expenses by campaign and grant. We will employ a similar process in effectively managing and completing this proposed project.

CRPE has had one EPA grant in the last five years, an EPA EJ Small Grant in 2012. We have received two USDA grants to support community agriculture projects. We have also successfully administered several leadership development grants in the past. Our funders for our leadership development, capacity-building, and training efforts include: the Irvine Foundation, the California Endowment, and the Kresge Foundation.

VI. Qualifications of the Project Manager (PM)

This project will be led by CRPE Community Organizer Bianca Quintero and overseen by our director of organizing Gustavo Aguirre. Bianca is a native of the San Joaquin Valley who holds a BA from the University of California at Davis. She has worked with CRPE's communities for the past year on issues of air quality, sustainable agriculture and hazardous waste. Gustavo has over 33 years of organizing experience working with low income communities of color, previously serving as National Vice President of the United Farmworkers Union (UFW). During his time at the UFW, Gustavo trained hundreds of organizers through leadership trainings. He has been with CRPE for over eight years and in that time has helped CRPE build an active community base of over 500 residents. Juan Flores, a Community Organizer with CRPE, will

also support the project. As a teenager, Flores worked as a farm laborer in the grape fields, and then at a dairy where he saw firsthand the dangers of working in a non-regulated dairy. Prior to joining CRPE, he was a Family Advocate where he advocated for low income families to obtain free childcare. He possesses an A.S degree in Medical Assisting and is also an active member of COFEM (Consejo para las Federaciones Mexicanas). Since joining CRPE, Juan has been working closely with Comité Rosa's to improve the community of Wasco.

VII. Past Performance in Reporting on Outputs and Outcomes

1) US EPA EJ Small Grant

Grant # EPA-OECA-OEJ-12-01

Title: CRPE's Leadership Development Institute, Growing Leaders for a Healthy San Joaquin Valley

Amount: \$25,000

Point of Contact: Sara Russell

2) Irvine Foundation

Title: Systematic Inclusion of Low-income Residents in Kern, Kings and Tulare counties in Land-use Decision-making

Amount: \$750,000 over 36 months

Point of Contact: Connie Malloy

3) The California Endowment

Grant # 20141765

Title: Improving the Health of San Joaquin Valley Communities

Amount: 270,000 over 24 months

Point of Contact: Annalisa Robles

4) USDA

Grant # CALW-2012-00459

Title: From the Ground Up, Cultivating Cooperative and Community Farms

Amount: \$288,000 over 2.5 years

Point of Contact: Adam Preuter

5) Broad Reach Foundation

Grant # TFR14-00603

Title: Anti-fracking Campaign

Amount: \$40,000 over 12 months

Point of Contact: Deborah Felder

We provide written narrative reports and financial reports to our funders in accordance with our grant agreements, which usually specify a report every 6 to 12 months. We document progress towards our planned outputs and outcomes through a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures. These include the number of trainings, sign-in sheets documenting the number of people participating in trainings (particularly those who attend more than half), participant evaluations of the trainings, number of initiatives fostered by residents trained through our

programs, and collecting information on participants to turn their training into action through attending public hearings, testifying on issues, or providing comments on proposed regulations. Between reports we also provide email updates with media postings, campaign victories, and other significant milestones.

In general, we successfully accomplish our grant outcomes and outputs. When we have experienced challenges or difficulties in meeting those objectives in the past, we have reported those challenges to the funder. If necessary, we will work with the funder to adjust the expectations accordingly.

VIII. Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Information

CRPE will not be collecting new data, but will be working with existing environmental quality information and data in order to educate and engage community residents in making recommendations to regulatory agencies regarding rulemaking or policy choices.